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XO (SALT) RA PA SF

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FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

TO RUEHIA/USIA WASHDC 945

INFO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4812

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UNCLAS HELSINKI 1266

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FINNISH EDITORIAL REACTION TO SALT II

FINNISH PAPERS HAVE REACTED GENERALLY WITH UNDERSTANDING TO THE AUGUST 14 ANNOUNCEMENT ON NEW LOCATION FOR SALT II.

INDEPENDENT HELSINGIN SANOMAT: "REASONS FOR WHICH THE SALT TALKS ARE SHIFTED FROM HELSINKI AND VIENNA TO GENEVA ARE CREDIBLE. WITH THE GOING OF SALT, FINLAND AND AUSTRIA WILL LOSE THE POLITICAL ADVANTAGE RELATED TO SERVING AS HOSTS FOR SUPER POWERS. THERE ARE NO INDICATIONS, THOUGH, THAT SUSPICION OF THEIR NEUTRALITY WOULD LIE IN THE BACKGROUND. FINLAND CAN ONLY SAY ABOUT THE FIRST PHASE OF SALT TALKS THAT IT WAS NICE AS LONG AS IT LASTED."

CONSERVATIVE UUSI SUOMI: "DEPARTURE OF EXCITING SALT NEGOTIATORS SHOULD NOT BE SEEN AS A HUMILIATION. WE CAN ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR FACTUAL REASONS FOR A SHIFT OF NEGOTIATING SITE AND SAY A SLIGHTLY NOSTALGIC GOODBYE."

INDEPENDENT ETELA SUOMEN SANOMAT: "IT IS NATURALLY REGRETTABLE FOR FINLAND TO LOSE THE SALT TALKS. YET WE SHOULD REMEMBER THAT THE FIRST PHASE WAS CONCLUDED IN OUR CAPITAL CITY, IT IS ALSO UNDERSTANDABLE THAT ONE NEST IS NECESSARY FOR SALT."

INDEPENDENT TURUN SANOMAT: "ASSURANCES OF SATISFACTION BY

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THE NEGOTIATING PARTIES MAY SERVE TO COMPENSATE DISAPPOINTMENT FELT BY CERTAIN QUARTERS FOR THE CHANGE OF CONFERENCE SITE."

COMMUNIST KAN, AN 4475 35: "FOR AN AVERAGE FINN IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE WHETHER THESE NEGOTIATIONS--IMPORTANT AS THEY ARE--ARE HELD IN HELSINKI, HUMPPILA OR GENEVA AS LONG AS AN AGREEMENT IS REACHED."

EXTREME LEFTIST PAIVAN SANOMAT: "THE MAIN THING IS NOT THE SITE BUT KEEPING THE NEGOTIATIONS GOING AND GETTING RESULTS, ALTHOUGH SALT'S DEPARTURE CAN BE REGARDED AS A LOSS TO OUR COUNTRY."

ONE NOTABLE EXCEPTION IS REACTION OF FINLAND'S SECOND LARGEST NEWSPAPER, CONSERVATIVE AAMULEHTI: "ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE TRANSFER OF SALT II TO GENEVA WAS SURPRISING, UNPLEASANT AND EVEN OMINOUS AT FIRST SIGHT. IN SPITE OF THE ASSURANCES OF OUR FOREIGN MINISTRY (IN NO CASE WILL THERE BE ANY HARD FEELING), THE REASONS FOR GIVING UP HELSINKI DO NOT SEEM SUFFICIENT. WHY THE TRANSFER? AS FAR AS OFFICIAL FINLAND IS CONCERNED, THERE IS PROBABLY NOT MUCH ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT ON SALT. OUR FOREIGN MINISTRY HAS WON PUBLIC RECOGNITION FOR ITS ARRANGEMENTS. NEITHER IS IT LIKELY THAT OUR BOLDISH MOVES IN THE GERMAN ISSUE ARE PART OF THE SETUP. THE WORST TENDENCY BEHIND THE QUESTION-MARK WOULD BE A SYMPTOM OF A FLAW IN THE RECOGNIZABILITY OF OUR POSITION OF NEUTRALITY OR OF A THREAT TO OUR CHANCES OF HOSTING THE SECURITY CONFERENCE, SO PAINSTAKINGLY CONSTRUED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC. IF THIS BECOMES A FACT, CERTAIN MOTIVES NEED NOT BE SOUGHT VERY FAR. UNERIDLED AND OUTRAGEOUS INTERFERENCE--WHICH CONTINUES FROM DAY TO DAY-- IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF ONE OF THE SALT PARTIES, ESPECIALLY BY RADIO/TV, THE OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT ORGAN, IS ONE OF THE FACTORS WHICH WILL NOT IMPROVE THE IMAGE OF OUR NEUTRALITY ABROAD. THIS HAS ALREADY ONCE RESULTED IN A PUBLIC DIPLOMATIC REACTION; GOOD FORBID THAT THE TIME HAS COME TO HARVEST WHAT HAS BEEN SOWN." STIER

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